

12 things you need to know about LinkedIn

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In the Social Network world, LinkedIn is that serious older brother or sister that is always concerned about their career and never seems to have any fun. They don't take goofy pictures or show you tonnes of videos of their kids BUT when you need advice or help with work, you can count on them to help.

If you are in the workforce, or thinking of returning to it, LinkedIn is a must! Some employers even consider a LinkedIn profile to be a resume and will screen people on this basis (without informing a potential candidate) for an open position. Here are the 12 things you need to know about LinkedIn and how to maximize its use for your benefit.

1. LinkedIn is one of the biggest networks and growing!

LinkedIn has 259 million users and spans 200 countries. Unlike the networks where you share your inner thoughts or photos, LinkedIn is by far the largest professional network which means it will likely continue to hold its course. Privacy concerns on LinkedIn are few and it serves its niche purpose very well.

2. You can customize your profile to stand out

Here are 3 great things you can do to make your profile stand out from the others:

- **Add media!** LinkedIn allows you to add presentations, videos and photographs right to your profile. Select the '+' buttons under each position. A great way to show off what you do.
- **Add up to 3 website links.** You can put in a personal website but you can also add in links for your favourite places to post (Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, your blog etc.). When you select 'Edit' on your profile, a new option will appear on the bottom right of your profile section that says 'Edit your contact info'. This will bring up a website section. Each time you add one you have the option to select a predefined type (company website, blog) or 'Other'. If you pick 'Other' then you can enter in any wording you like. Example: Mine says "Follow us on Facebook" with the Facebook page link.
- **Rearrange sections.** By default, your Background (jobs) appear first, then your Skills and Endorsements, Patents etc. If you want those sections to appear in a different order, just go in to Edit your profile, and use the arrows on the sides of the sections to move them up or down.

3. It has its own YouTube channel, and it's awesome

From How-To videos to interviews with many industry leaders, [LinkedIn's YouTube channel](#) is a treasure trove of information for people starting their career, to entrepreneurs. It includes lots of useful guidance on settings up company pages and groups as well as improving your own account.

4. You can set your own custom URL



No need to have a long and undecipherable URL (web address) for your profile. Go in to your [public profile settings page](#). Scroll down to the right and you will see a box that says "Your public profile URL" (as pictured above). Select "Customize your public profile URL" and you will be able to change your LinkedIn page to a friendlier name. Mine is now ca.linkedin.com/in/catcoode.

5. You can apply for jobs directly from your phone

Since 40% of all people browse only from their phones, it also makes sense that you can apply for jobs directly from there as well. This can be especially helpful when time is of the essence. For more information on how to apply from your mobile LinkedIn app, check out this great [article from Information Week](#).

6. Hate writing resumes? There's an app for that

Having a LinkedIn profile is a must but sometimes companies still want a document version of your resume. Never fear, LinkedIn has tool to create a resume right from your profile. Just pick a template and go! The resume builder is part of LinkedIn labs and can be found [here](#).

7. Use the right picture, but look left

A profile picture makes your profile 7 times more likely to be looked at, so you definitely want one. Try and pick one that is high quality and shows your professional 'brand'. **Tip:** make sure you are looking forward (engaging your reader) or to your left (looking at your content). Looking to the right actually shows a disinterest or unawareness of your information and can inadvertently turn people off.

8. You can add a former name

If you have changed your name throughout the years, you can list an alternate name to search. Just 'Edit' your profile and select the pencil icon beside your name. There is a space for first name, last name and 'former' name. You can add anything you want in this section and it will appear in brackets between your first and last name.

9. You control your news feed and notifications

LinkedIn's newsfeed is great for articles from industry experts and updates from your connections! But this is not Facebook or Google+, so if you find you're getting daily jokes from a colleague or just too many notifications from a group, turn them off. Notifications for groups and updates are controlled in your [Account Settings](#) on the Communications tab. Updates from people are turned off from within the feed. Just hover over their update and the word 'Hide' will appear in the upper right corner of their post.

10. Find a job!

It sounds obvious but many people consider LinkedIn a repository of connections and not necessarily job listings. The [job board](#) can list open positions by industry or by search words. It will even recommend jobs for you based on your profile. Are you hiring? This is also a great place to post your openings.

11. Company pages are a wealth of info about the company

There are 3 million of them! If you are looking for information on a company you may be working

with or want to work for, this is a great source. If you have a company, you should have a company page. Products within a company often have their own showcase pages (Example: Microsoft is a company page, Windows is a Showcase page). You can post updates to your company page (like your blog or news) which can be shared.

12. Groups are a great way to network

If your city had a networking event with people in your industry or people who are alumni from your educational institution, would you go? Then you should join groups. The average LinkedIn member is part of 7 groups. There are 2.1 million groups to chose from. As defined by LinkedIn "*LinkedIn Groups provide a place for professionals in the same industry or with similar interests to share content, find answers, post and view jobs, make business contacts, and establish themselves as industry experts.*" **Tip:** There is a section at the top of a group that says *i*, click there and chose "Group Statistics". This will give you a breakdown on the types of people who are part of group by location, company function and industry. You can check this before you join.

Hopefully this helped shine some light on the features of LinkedIn. If you haven't in while, make sure you visit to update your resume and make some adjustments to your settings.